

March 20, 2021

Dear General Committee members of the Markham City Council,

Sub: Yonge North Subway Extension

My greetings to all.

I am a resident of the City of Markham since 1979. I have lived in the general area bounded by Royal Orchard Blvd. and Bay Thorn Drive this entire period. It is a very peaceful community, a great place to raise a family, and where residents look out for each other. It is anchored by Heintzman House and two excellent schools, one of which, the Bay Thorn Public School, likely to be most impacted by the proposed route of the subway, was attended by both my children, and now my granddaughter studies there today. The Royal Orchard ravine, running along Don River East, right in my backyard, provides families with a nature trail where children, both from neighborhood homes and the two schools, can run around, learn about nature, and the variety of insects, amphibians, birds, small mammal and the like that have a habitat there - and they are already aware that survival of these species is critical to environmental sustainability. The ravine also provides adults with an avenue to connect with nature, and to help with our mental and physical wellbeing. I for one, have been running or walking in that ravine 5-6 days a week since 1979.

This is the environment and the eco-system the proposed subway line will be intruding into very directly.

When I purchased my first home in this area in 1979, one attraction cited to us was the plans for a subway extension, and likelihood of a subway station at Royal Orchard and Yonge. But, at that time, no one knew that we would have to wait 40 plus years or more for it to come to where it is at today. **But now that the plan is here, rather than fulfil the promise of more accessible and efficient transit, it comes with devastating consequences for my community.** Under this plan, as I read it:

1. There is to be no subway station at Royal Orchard and Yonge – which has been promised for decades. While there is a vague prospect that the plan **may** incorporate a station at Royal Orchard and Yonge, my reading of the draft plan is that this is not seen as a high probability. **No subway station at Royal Orchard means a broken promise, and absolutely no benefit of the subway extension to my community.**
2. We can expect almost certain destruction of our property values, notwithstanding what all the experts might say. Just ask the people whose homes back on to power corridors, where they were assured by experts of no adverse impact due to electromagnetic fields. Or folks living close to subway lines in various parts of Toronto. **This destruction in value, the inability to receive appropriate equity from our homes that we have worked hard for decades to build, starts today.**

3. Also, as of today, we are in a state of limbo, which will last for the next 10 years or more. While we all take pride in our houses, investing in our properties during this time will be difficult to justify. Until the subway is operational, it will be impossible to prove that there are no detrimental effects on the houses above.

4. Adverse impact on our lifestyle and the sense of peace and tranquility we enjoy in this community. **We can expect 16 hours a day of intermittent noise and vibrations transmitted through our properties, resulting in adverse impact on our sleep and general peace of mind, and thus overall health.**

5. Potential for significant negative impact on our refuge for physical and mental wellness - the Royal Orchard ravine- **reflected in terms of adverse impacts on trees, shrubs, and particularly the large variety of species who make it their habitat.**

In waiting patiently all these years for a subway line extension, we never hoped for such a plan. **If it has taken our elected provincial representatives and their planners decades to plan for this relatively short extension, and costs have skyrocketed, my community should not be asked to bear the burden of this delay and suffer its consequences.**

Finally, upon reading the material regarding this plan on the web site, the only reason I could decipher as to why the subway would go through our community is due to “sensitivity relating to construction and operation near the Holy Cross Cemetery lands”. **My humble question therefore to the Committee would be - should disruption to and impact on lifestyle of the living be of lesser concern.**

I therefore urge the Markham City Council to reject this plan as currently drafted, and ask for it to be revised for all the reasons I have stated above.

Should the council, in its wisdom, choose not to do so, then I and my fellow Royal Orchard community residents will be left with no option but to exercise every legitimate means and avenue we have as residents of this great city, and citizens of this great country, to make sure that this plan, as proposed now, never comes to fruition.

I thank the Markham City Council, and in particular my Councilor Keith Irish for giving me this opportunity to express my views today. I also thank Metrolinx for the great work they do in planning for our transportation, but ask of them to give serious consideration to my views and those of my community.

All of the above comments offered with utmost respect.

Sincerely,

Dev Chopra

